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**MAJOR MILESTONE REACHED IN CITY'S COMMITMENT  
TO CLOSE RIKERS ISLAND JAILS**

*Latest steps come on the anniversary of the historic City Council vote to shutter Rikers Island and bring new, modern facilities closer to communities*

**NEW YORK**—The de Blasio Administration today reaffirmed its commitment to the closure of jails on Rikers Island, providing the City Planning Commission with the most comprehensive plan to date to build four new borough-based facilities.

With a new completion date of 2027, the timeframe will allow adequate time for City officials, community stakeholders, justice advocates, building contractors, and others to work together to ensure the best possible results amid the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 crisis. The date also maintains the Mayor's commitment to finishing the project in a 10-year timeframe.

"We are moving forward with our historic plan to close Rikers Island and create a smaller, safer and more humane jail system," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "This comprehensive plan gets us one step closer to bringing people back to their communities, one step closer to ending the cycle of recidivism and one step closer to ending mass incarceration once and for all."

"The City Council overwhelming voted to close Rikers Island, and our goal of shutting this living symbol of mass incarceration in our city remains the same. Today's vote ensures that there is a legally binding mechanism for this administration and future administrations to stay on that course and I want to acknowledge and thank the criminal justice advocacy community for all their efforts to get us here," said **Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

The updated plans come on the anniversary of the historic City Council vote that began the process of shuttering the jails on Rikers Island, and the building of new smaller, safer, fairer facilities. The vote represented the culmination of years of efforts, begun by justice and community activists. Mayor de Blasio announced the City's plans for borough-based facilities in August 2018, kicking off the City's land use process that ended with the successful Council vote in October 2019.

The City's ability to close the island jails on Rikers will be made possible by the continued reduction of the City's incarcerated population. Since 2013, the number of people in jail has dropped significantly, down 61% from the 11,500 seven years ago. The City has simultaneously invested in jail diversion for those awaiting trial like the award-winning Supervised Release program, alternatives to incarceration programs for those who would otherwise serve jail sentences, as well as robust re-entry services to help keep those departing jail from ever returning.

The updated plans presented to the City Planning Commission include dates through the end of 2021 for request for proposals from interested developers and architects to participate in the innovative design-build process. Designers and builders are paired to streamline the construction process, from concept to shovels in the ground, while saving taxpayer money. The borough-based program is the City's first use of this system.

The proposal process will have the added benefit of a peer review as an additional step to ensure designs meet the highest levels of quality. The Manhattan peer review is being facilitated by The Architectural League of New York's Executive Director Rosalie Genevro.

The request for proposals to the pre-qualified Manhattan design-build teams will be issued before the end of 2020.

"We remain committed to moving operations into new borough-based facilities that represent the very best in correctional design, and providing the safest, most humane environment possible for those who work and live in our jails. We have not, however, waited for the physical move and have made great strides towards realizing positive culture change and implementing best correctional practices," said **Department of Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann**.

"The process of creating a new model for justice in New York City and the nation begins with literally building a better system from the ground up. The design and construction of the new borough-based facilities represents a powerful initial opportunity to further transform justice in New York City," said **Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice**. "We expect our new justice facilities to have a significant beneficial effect on the lives and well-being of those inside who are detained and those who work inside, as well as become civic assets for the communities in which they are situated."

"We continue to move the City's Borough Based Jails program forward to meet the essential goal of closing Rikers island and building more equitable and just facilities closer to courts, services and loved ones," said **NYC Department of Design and Construction Commissioner Lorraine Grillo**. "New, borough-based facilities are a cornerstone of the historic effort to close Rikers and DDC is working to deliver humane and safe facilities."

"This milestone is an important step in ensuring the closure of Rikers Island in 2027 on a timeline that incorporates community process and responsiveness. It is a moral imperative to close Rikers and significantly reduce the city's jail population. New York's legislative changes over the past year shows the progress that's been made and the importance of continuing to invest in alternatives to incarceration programs. I look forward to continuing to work toward the full closure of Rikers Island jails," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**.

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